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THE WILD BOAR AND THE BEAR

Among the Celts, the boar and the bear symbolized respectively the representatives of spiritual authority and those of temporal power, that is to say, the two castes of Druids and Knights, equivalent, at least originally and in their essential functions, to what in India are those of the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. As we have indicated elsewhere[1], this symbolism, of clearly Hyperborean origin, is one of the marks of the direct connection of the Celtic tradition with the primordial tradition of the present Manvantara, whatever other elements, deriving from earlier traditions but already secondary and derivative, may have been able to attach themselves to this principal current and, in a certain manner, be reabsorbed into it. What we mean here is that the Celtic tradition could plausibly be regarded as constituting one of the "points of junction" of the Atlantean tradition with the Hyperborean tradition, after the end of the secondary period during which this Atlantean tradition represented the predominant form, and as the "substitute" for the original center already inaccessible to ordinary humanity[2]; and, on this point as well, the same symbolism we have just mentioned may provide some indications that are not without interest.

Let us first note the importance also given to the symbol of the boar by the Hindu tradition, itself directly issuing from the primordial tradition and expressly affirming in the Veda its own Hyperborean origin. The boar (varāha) does not appear there only, as is well known, as the third of the ten avatāras of Vishnu in the present Manvantara; but our entire Kalpa, that is to say, the entire cycle of manifestation of our world, is designated there as Shwêta-varāha-Kalpa, the "cycle of the white boar."

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1 Autorité spirituelle et pouvoir temporel, pp. 19–20.

2 Cf. Le Roi du Monde, pp. 111 ff., notably as regards the relations of Hyperborean Tula and Atlantean Tula (Tula being one of the primary designations of spiritual centers); see also our article Atlantide et Hyperborée (October 1929).

That being so, and if one considers the analogy that necessarily exists between the great cycle and the subordinate cycles, it is natural that the mark of the Kalpa, if one may express it thus, should be found again at the point of departure of the Manvantara; and that is why the polar "sacred land," seat of the primordial spiritual center of this Manvantara, is also called Vārāhī, or the "land of the boar"[3].

Moreover, since it was there that the first spiritual authority resided, of which every other legitimate authority of the same order is only an emanation, it is no less natural that the representatives of such an authority should also have received the symbol of the boar as their distinctive sign and should have retained it in the course of time; and that is why the Druids designated themselves as "boars," although, since symbolism always has multiple aspects, one may at the same time see in it, secondarily, an allusion to the isolation in which they maintained themselves with regard to the outer world, the boar being always regarded as the "solitary." It must be added, moreover, that this isolation itself, realized materially, among the Celts as among the Hindus, in the form of a retreat in the forest, is not without relation to the characteristics of "primordiality," a reflection of which must always have been maintained in every spiritual authority worthy of the function it fulfills.

But let us return to the name Vārāhī, which gives rise to particularly important remarks: it is considered as an aspect of the Shakti of Vishnu (and more especially in relation to his third avatāra), which, given the "solar" character of the latter, immediately shows its identity with the primitive "solar land" or "Syria" of which we have spoken on other occasions[4], and which is yet another designation of Hyperborean Tula, that is to say, of the primordial spiritual center. On the other hand, the root var, for the name of the boar, is found in the Nordic languages in the form bor[5]; the exact equivalent of Vārāhī is therefore "Borea," and

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3 See again on this subject Atlantide et Hyperborée (October 1929); we pointed out there that, contrary to what Saint-Yves d'Alveydre seems to have thought, this name Vārāhī in no way applies to Europe; in truth, the latter was never anything but the "Land of the Bull," which refers to a period far removed from the origins

4 See "The Science of Letters' and 'The Land of the Sun'.

5 In English bear, in German Bär.

the truth is that the usual name "Hyperborea" was employed only by the Greeks at a time when they had already lost the sense of this ancient designation; it would therefore be preferable, despite the usage that has prevailed since then, to qualify the primordial tradition not as "Hyperborean" but simply as "Borean," thereby unequivocally affirming its connection with "Borea" or the "land of the boar."

There is yet something else: the root var or vri, in Sanskrit, has the meanings "to cover," "to protect," and "to conceal"; and, as is shown by the name Varuna and its Greek equivalent Ouranos, it serves to designate the sky, both because it covers the earth and because it represents the higher worlds, hidden from the senses[6]. Now all this applies perfectly to the spiritual centers, whether because they are hidden from the eyes of the profane, or because they protect the world by their invisible influence, or finally because they are, on earth, like images of the celestial world itself. Let us add that the same root also has another meaning, that of "choice" or "election" (vara), which obviously is no less suitable for the region that is everywhere designated by names such as "land of the elect," "land of the saints," or "land of the blessed"[7].

One may have noted, in what we said earlier, the union of the two "polar" and "solar" symbolisms; but, as far as the boar properly speaking is concerned, it is the "polar" aspect that matters above all; and this moreover results from the fact that the boar formerly represented the constellation which later became the Great Bear[8]. There is, in this substitution of names, one of the marks of what the Celts symbolized precisely by the struggle of the boar and the bear, that is to say, the revolt of the representatives of temporal power against the supremacy of spiritual authority, with the various vicissitudes that followed in the course of successive historical epochs. The first manifestations of this revolt, in fact, go back much further than ordinarily known history, and

6 Cf. Le Roi du Monde, ch. 7, where we showed also that the Latin word coelum itself originally had the same meaning.

7 Let us point out again, by way of a possible comparison, the Germanic root ur, which has a meaning of "primordiality."

8 It should be born in mind that this constellation has also had many other names, among them that of the scales; but it would be beyond the range of this chapter to deal with it here.

even further than the beginning of the Kali-Yuga, in which it was to take on its greatest extension; that is why the name bor could be transferred from the boar to the bear[9], and why "Borea" itself, the "land of the boar," could consequently become, at a certain moment, the "land of the bear," during a period of predominance of the Kshatriyas, which, according to the Hindu tradition, was brought to an end by Parashu-Rāma[10].

In this same Hindu tradition, the most usual name of the Great Bear is sapta-riksha; and the Sanskrit word riksha is the name of the bear, linguistically identical to that which it bears in various other languages: Celtic arth, Greek arktos, and even Latin ursus. However, one may ask whether this is indeed the primary meaning of the expression sapta-riksha, or whether there was not rather, corresponding to the substitution we have just spoken of, a kind of superposition of etymologically distinct words, but brought together and even identified by the application of a certain phonetic symbolism. In fact, riksha also means, in a general way, a star, that is to say, in sum, a "light" (archis, from the root arch or ruch, "to shine" or "to illuminate"); and, on the other hand, the sapta-riksha is the symbolic dwelling of the seven Rishis, who, besides the fact that their name relates to "vision," thus to light, are themselves also the seven "Lights" through which the Wisdom of previous cycles was transmitted to the present cycle[11]. The connection thus established between the bear and light does not, moreover, constitute an isolated case in animal symbolism, for one encounters an entirely similar one for the wolf, both among the Celts and among the Greeks[12], from which resulted its attribution to the solar god, Belen or Apollo.

In a certain period, the name sapta-riksha was applied no longer to the

9 In German Bär.

10 We have already had occasion to point out, in this connection, that Fabre d'Olivet and those who followed him, such as Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, seem to have made a rather strange confusion between Parashu-Rāma and Rāma-Chandra, that is to say, between the sixth and seventh avatāras of Vishnu.

11 One will note the persistence of these "seven Lights" in Masonic symbolism: the presence of the same number of persons representing them is necessary both for the constitution of a "just and perfect" Lodge and for the validity of initiatic transmission. — Let us also note that the seven stars spoken of at the beginning of the Apocalypse (I, 16 and 20) would, according to certain interpretations, be those of the Great Bear.

12 In Greek, the wolf is lukos and light luki; hence the epithet with double meaning of Lycian Apollo.

Great Bear but to the Pleiades, which also comprise seven stars; this transfer from a polar constellation to a zodiacal constellation corresponds to a passage from solstitial symbolism to equinoctial symbolism, implying a change in the point of departure of the annual cycle, as well as in the order of predominance of the cardinal points that are related to the different phases of this cycle[13]. This change is here that from North to West, which refers to the Atlantean period; and this is clearly confirmed by the fact that, for the Greeks, the Pleiades were daughters of Atlas and, as such, also called Atlantides. Transfers of this kind are moreover often the cause of multiple confusions, the same names having received, according to the periods, different applications, and this as much for terrestrial regions as for celestial constellations, so that it is not always easy to determine to what they refer exactly in each case, and that this is even really possible only on the condition of relating their various "localizations" to the characteristics proper to the corresponding traditional forms, as we have just done for those of the sapta-riksha.

Among the Greeks, the revolt of the Kshatriyas was figured by the hunt of the Calydonian boar, which moreover manifestly represents a version in which the Kshatriyas themselves express their claim to attribute to themselves a definitive victory, since the boar is there killed by them; and Athenaeus reports, following earlier authors, that this Calydonian boar was white[14], which clearly identifies it with the Shwêta-varāha of the Hindu tradition[15]. What is no less significant from our point of view is that the first blow was struck by Atalanta, who, it is said, had been nourished by a bear; and this name Atalanta could indicate that the revolt had its beginning either in Atlantis itself, or at least among the heirs of its tradition[16]. On the other hand, the name Calydon is found exactly in that of Caledonia, the ancient name of Scotland: apart from any question of particular "localization," it is properly the land of the

13 The transfer of the Scales into the Zodiac naturally also has a similar significance.

14 Deipnosophistarum, IX, 13.

15 It is scarcely necessary to recall that white is also the color symbolically attributed to spiritual authority; and it is known that the Druids, in particular, wore white garments.

16 There are also other curious parallels in this respect, as for example between the golden apples of the legend of Atalanta and those of the garden of the Hesperides or 'daughters of the West', who were also daughters of Atlas, as were the Pleiads.

"Kaldes" or Celts[17]; and the forest of Calydon does not in reality differ from that of Brocéliande, whose name is still the same, although under a somewhat modified form, and preceded by the root bro or bor, that is to say, by the very name of the boar.

The fact that the bear is often taken symbolically under its feminine aspect, as we have just seen in connection with Atalanta, and as one also sees from the denominations of the constellations of the Great Bear and the Little Bear, is also not without significance as regards its attribution to the warrior caste, holder of temporal power, and this for several reasons. First, this caste normally has a "receptive" role, that is to say, a feminine one, vis-à-vis the sacerdotal caste, since it is from the latter that it receives not only the teaching of traditional doctrine but also the legitimation of its own power, in which strictly consists the "divine right." Next, when this same warrior caste, overturning the normal relations of subordination, lays claim to supremacy, its predominance is generally accompanied by that of feminine elements in the symbolism of the traditional form modified by it, and sometimes even also, as a consequence of this modification, by the institution of a feminine form of priesthood, such as that of the Druidesses among the Celts. We merely indicate here this last point, the development of which would take us too far, especially if we wished to seek elsewhere for concordant examples; but at least this indication suffices to make understood why it is the she-bear, rather than the bear, that is symbolically opposed to the boar.

It should be added that the two symbols of the boar and the bear do not always necessarily appear as being in opposition or in struggle, but that, in certain cases, they can also represent spiritual authority and temporal power, or the two castes of Druids and Knights, in their normal and harmonious relations, as one sees notably in the legend of Merlin and Arthur. In fact, Merlin, the Druid, is still the boar of the forest of Brocéliande (where he is moreover finally not killed like the Calydonian boar, but only put to sleep by a feminine power); and King Arthur bears

17 It is moreover probable that this name of the Celts, like that of the Chaldeans which is identical with it, was not originally that of a particular people, but that of a sacerdotal caste exercising spiritual authority among different peoples.

a name derived from that of the bear, arth[18]; more precisely, this name is identical to that of the star Arcturus, taking into account the slight difference due to their respectively Celtic and Greek derivations. This star is found in the constellation of the Herdsman (Boötes), and, by these names, one may still see brought together the marks of two different periods: the "garden of the Bear" became the Herdsman when the Bear itself, or the sapta-riksha, became the septem triones, that is to say, the "seven oxen" (whence the appellation "Septentrion" to designate the North); but we do not have to concern ourselves here with these transformations, relatively recent with respect to what we are considering[19].

From the considerations we have just set forth, a conclusion seems to emerge regarding the respective role of the two currents that contributed to forming the Celtic tradition: originally, spiritual authority and temporal power were not separated as two differentiated functions, but united in their common principle, and one finds a vestige of this union in the very name of the Druids (dru-vid, "force-wisdom," these two terms being symbolized by the oak and the mistletoe)[20]; in this capacity, and also as representing more particularly spiritual authority, to which the upper part of the doctrine is reserved, they were the true heirs of the primordial tradition, and the essentially "Borean" symbol, that of the boar, belonged to them in their own right. As for the Knights, having the bear (or the she-bear of Atalanta) as their symbol, one may think that the part of the tradition that was more especially destined for them comprised above all the elements proceeding from the Atlantean tradition, and this distinction might even perhaps help to explain certain more or less enigmatic points in the later history of Western traditions

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18 One also finds in Scotland, as a family name, Mac-Arth, or "son of the bear," which obviously indicates membership in a warrior clan.

19 Arthur is the son of Uther Pendragon, the "chief of the five," the supreme ruler who resides in the fifth kingdom, that of Afal or Avallon, situated at the center of the four other subordinate kingdoms located at the four cardinal points (see Le Roi du Monde, pp. 110–113); and this role is comparable to that of the celestial Dragon when, containing the polar influence, it was "in the middle of the sky like a king upon his throne," according to the expression of the Sepher Yetsirah (cf. our already cited article La Terre du Soleil).

20 See Autorité spirituelle et pouvoir temporel, pp. 59–60, where we indicated the equivalence of this symbolism with that of the Sphinx.